ISTEP Update

April 25, 2014

Dear Fellow Educators,

Please share this information with your testing coordinators and teachers.

The Department is aware of the outages that Oklahoma experienced earlier this week and we are in the process of gathering information about exactly what happened. It appears that testing in Oklahoma has gone smoothly since the initial interruptions on Monday.

In addition, our technology and assessment teams are reaching out to Oklahoma and working with CTB to ensure that CTB is ready when ISTEP starts next week. Finally, our assessment team is working with local schools to ensure that their networks are ready for testing and CTB has engineers available for on-site support.

During the ISTEP+ Practice Test window, which began on March 24, it is typical for schools to request assistance regarding error codes and other situations that may occur during the administration of the Practice Test. Common error codes include 209 (test content not properly downloaded from CTB) and 407 (using invalid login credentials).

The "Please Wait" message is designed to display if there is a delay of any kind when information is transported across the Internet to or from CTB's Data Center. The "Please Wait" message may appear based on a variety of local issues, including everything from too many computers connected to a wireless router to sites using just one server to deliver the test content to hundreds of test takers at once. Please see this video from CTB http://vimeo.com/92332520 for help on understanding the reason for the "Please Wait" message.

Calls to CTB and the IDOE regarding these and other occurrences are expected and are not unusual. From this Monday through Wednesday, our Office of Assessment received 21 calls regarding "Please Wait" issues. As a reference point, the Department received over 300 total calls, so those regarding "Please Wait" issues constituted a little less than 7% of total calls. The other 286 calls were the types of calls that we typically see in the days leading up to ISTEP administration.

Staff at CTB are trained to assist the field in resolving local issues through a three-tiered system of support. Local schools and corporations are encouraged to contact CTB with questions or concerns, and the staff at CTB and the IDOE collaborate daily regarding any issues.

Please read a more detailed memorandum below.

Sincerely,

Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction

MEMORANDUM: STEP+ Online Testing Update

Oklahoma Experience and Indiana Preparations

The Indiana Department of Education is aware of the outages that Oklahoma experienced earlier this week, and it appears that testing has gone smoothly since the initial interruptions on Monday. The IDOE Technology and Assessment teams reached out to Oklahoma and are working with CTB to ensure that CTB is ready when ISTEP+ starts next week. In addition, our Assessment team is working with local schools to ensure that their networks are ready for testing, and CTB has engineers available for on-site support.

During the ISTEP+ Practice Test window, which began on March 24, it is typical for schools to request assistance regarding error codes and other situations that may occur during the administration of the ISTEP+ Practice Test. Common error codes include 209 (test content not properly downloaded from CTB) and 407 (using invalid login credentials).

The "Please Wait" message is designed to display if there is a delay of any kind when information is transported across the Internet to or from CTB's Data Center. The "Please Wait" message may appear based on a variety of local issues, including everything from too many computers connected to a wireless router, to sites using just one server to deliver the test content to hundreds of test takers at once. Please see this two-minute video from CTB http://vimeo.com/92332520 for help in understanding the reason for the "Please Wait" message.

Calls to CTB and the IDOE regarding these and other occurrences are expected and are not unusual. Monday through Wednesday of this week, the number of calls to the Office of Student Assessment regarding "Please Wait" was approximately 7%. Other calls consisted of questions that we typically see in the days leading up to the ISTEP+ administration.

Staff members at CTB are trained to assist the field in resolving local issues through a three-tiered system of support, and staff at CTB and the IDOE collaborate daily regarding testing. Local schools and corporations are encouraged to contact CTB with questions or concerns.

Understanding the Online System

As your sites prepare to administer the ISTEP+ Multiple-Choice Online test, it is critical that you are aware of how the systems are designed to work and actions that are required to be taken in the event of any online testing situations. **Please review the following and share this information with appropriate staff.**

Online System Video

Watch this two-minute video http://vimeo.com/92332520, which explains how CTB's online systems are designed to ensure data is securely stored in the event the workstation loses connection with their Data Center (alternatively, you can also use the PDF handout attached).

Message to Test Coordinators

- Keep your Technology Coordinator informed about your test administration schedule across all testing sites at your corporation/school.
- Keep your Technology Coordinator's contact information on hand (cell phone, etc.) and ensure s/he is reachable immediately for any troubleshooting needs during testing.
- For the latest online system health status, please watch for ticker updates and/or click on the 'News/Dashboard' button on www.ctb.com/istep.

Message to Technology Coordinators

- Download and keep with you the "TDC Error Codes" and "IN Online - Quick Troubleshooting Tips" documents from www.ctb.com/istep Online testing toolkit folder. These documents provide immediate help to troubleshoot issues that may arise at your testing sites.
- For latest online system health status, please watch for ticker updates and/or click on the 'News/Dashboard' button on www.ctb.com/istep.
- If your students are using iPads to take the ISTEP+ Multiple-Choice test, please download and keep with you the "iPad Tips" document and ensure that appropriate staff at local testing sites how to use and manage Guided Access feature of the iOS (including securely remembering the Guided Access password).

Message to Test Examiners

- Watch this two-minute video http://vimeo.com/92332520, or view the attached PDF handout.
- Follow the testing directions in the ISTEP+ Multiple-Choice Examiner's Manual.
- In the event any student experiences a 'Please Wait' message, as described in the video/handout, the student may be able to continue testing if the system resumes connection.
- If the EXIT TEST button is displayed:

1. Make a note of the time in your testing irregularities log (located in the front of the Examiner's Manual) for this student;
2. Ask the student to click on the EXIT TEST button, and if necessary, move the student to a different testing workstation, if available; OR
3. Ask the student to try logging back in using the same testing workstation.
4. If student is unable to login, contact your Technology Coordinator for assistance in troubleshooting the situation.

- When the student logs back in to resume testing, please make a note of the start time in the testing irregularities log and ensure that additional time is given for the student to complete the test session.
- If your entire testing lab (or a majority of the students) experience a system disruption and are unable to proceed with testing:

1. Make a note of the time in your testing irregularities log for the session.
2. Contact your Technology Coordinator immediately for troubleshooting, and inform your Test Coordinator.
3. Upon resuming the testing session for all students, log the start time and ensure additional time is given for students to complete the test.

- As a reminder, a sample timing chart for testing irregularities is printed on the inside front cover of all Examiner's Manuals.
- Contact your Test Coordinator for any questions regarding testing policies and/or procedures.

We encourage you to share the video with your examiners, proctors and other test administrators. (CTB Please Wait handout)